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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 DAR ES SALAAM 000340

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF/E JLIDDLE; INR/RAA FOR FEHRENREICH

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TAGS: [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [TZ](#)

SUBJECT: ZANZIBAR BY-ELECTION ENDS PEACEFULLY WITH RULING PARTY CCM WIN

REF A: DAR ES SALAAM 326, REF B: DAR ES SALAAM 238, REF C: DAR ES SALAAM 74 and prior

¶1. SUMMARY: The May 23 by-election in Magogoni, a contested suburb of Zanzibar capital Stonetown, ended with a ruling CCM party win over opposition CUF (2847 to 1974, or about 58% of the votes). The by-election was a key test of each party's will and a dry-run for Zanzibar Electoral Commission machinery in the last electoral event before the winner-take-all General Elections expected in October 2010. Fortunately, violent campaign rhetoric (ref A) did not match reality on Election Day, which was peaceful. There were some electoral anomalies, but observers - including losing CUF - said it was the best-run election ever held in Zanzibar (where political contests have usually been bloody). Observers also note, however, that the sustained, high-level focus on a single voting district, as in Magogoni, will be very different from simultaneous voting in 50 such districts in 2010. END SUMMARY.

RALLIES

¶2. May 22 saw the biggest rallies of the campaign. CCM national SYG Yusuf Makamba headlined the CCM event and worked house-to-house to unite factionalized senior CCM cadres. As before, CUF drew about double the numbers of CCM for its rallies, but could not deliver the same numbers at the ballot box. During CUF rallies, leaders told CUF voters to come to the polls early and to stay watchful for fraud attempts in the late morning and afternoon.

THE VOTE

¶3. Voters for the most part were orderly and seemed to be informed about locations and procedures to vote. Fully two-thirds (or more) of the voters were women. CUF overwhelmingly carried the District of Kinuni (site of violence during registration; ref B), but CCM made strong showings in the other two areas, enough to take the election.

¶4. Perhaps following CUF's entreaties, most voters appeared at the polls an hour before it opened, and most of the votes were cast by about 1030 a.m. By the early afternoon, we saw senior CCM officials driving voters to the polling stations in their personal vehicles. At CCM branch offices, we saw Zanzibar government vehicles bringing voters, mostly youths, to staging areas. At all polling places, Zanzibar ministers, national parliamentarians and senior officials from both parties were ubiquitous. Zanzibar Election Commission (ZEC) senior leadership also patrolled the polls. Nonetheless,

young CCM-picked volunteers actually confirmed voter identification and handed out ballots, which the various party observers sometimes vocally criticized.

¶15. Anomalies we witnessed directly included at least two people who were caught with voter cards not issued to them. At the small voting center at a geriatric hospital, several dozens of voters needed assistance. In most cases that "help" was provided by the hospital's principal doctor, a SMZ-CCM employee (CCM took almost 90% of the vote in that polling place, but it also should be noted that the hospital itself is a CCM/Government of Zanzibar (SMZ) institution).

¶16. On two occasions we saw under-age-looking people trying to register with someone else's IDs. Other international observers saw a few more such cases. In fact, we saw large numbers of young people, reputedly 18-19 years old according to their newly SMZ-issued ID and voter registration cards, many of whom appeared to be younger than 18. One young girl admitted to Zanzibar Affairs Specialist (ZAS) that she was in "Third Form," which would make her about 16 or 17 if she was a typical student. Some of the youth were seen to obtain their voting materials from the local CCM-appointed "Shehe," or headman. When challenged, they said that because a young girl had her ID card confiscated by CUF "Blue Guards" during registration (ref B), they elected to arrive without ID and collect it at the polling place, lest they be ambushed en route to voting.

POLICE: PRESENT BUT SUBDUED

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¶17. Fortunately, bellicose campaign rhetoric (ref A) did not match reality on Election Day. There had been rumors of extra troops coming to the island and the movement of heavy weapons beforehand, but ZAO and ZAS went by the various military camps and irregular forces camps and saw no evidence of this. There was an increased police presence in the Magagoni area, and each polling station had several police assigned to it. Ali Mussa Ali, head of Zanzibar Police operations and training, made it a point to consult with ZAO several times a day to ask for feedback on how his men were doing.

¶18. Ali Mussa said he selected local Zanzibaris for the sensitive task of voter security (COMMENT: Policing is a Union competency, and much of the force is Christian mainlanders, as opposed to the 97% Muslim population of Zanzibar. END COMMENT). Ali Mussa also said that prior to the vote he held special training seminars on voters' rights for the men picked to be involved, and police leaders also participated in seminars held with ZEC. Ali Mussa himself has attended several UN-sponsored training courses in Human Rights.

¶19. Police in and around the polling areas were unarmed, but nearby and visible were special riot squad members. At one polling station, towards the end of the day, a group of armed "Special Police," perhaps bored, came into the voter area and milled around until ZAO suggested to the commander that their presence near the entrance might be construed as threatening by some. The Police Commander promptly sent them away on patrol.

¶110. Further from the polling areas ZAO and ZAS saw groups of idle young men hanging about, but it was hard to discern if these people were CCM-backed "Janjaweed" or CUF "Blue Guards," sent to intimidate or protect - or if they had anything at all to do with the vote (unemployment is high in Zanzibar, especially for young males between 16-30). Those with whom we spoke said they lived in the area but were not voting, because they lived just outside the district, had not been resident in the district long enough to register, or were otherwise occupied.

INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS

¶111. The Embassies of Sweden, Netherlands, UK, Ireland, Norway and the EC sent observers, and members of the UN (including the Country

Team Leader) were present and visible. Many of the European election observers had witnessed other recent Tanzanian by-election held in the mainland over the last several months (septels), and all were impressed by the heightened state of politicization of Zanzibaris vis-à-vis mainlanders. Early during Election Day, one of the observers got into a spat with a young, over-zealous ZEC worker.

ZEC Director Salim Kassim took the side of his worker and complained that it was the observers who were obstructing the voters, not anyone else. Later he said he had no rancor with the U.S. or the UN (the only observers during the registration process), but he griped to us that the Europeans had come with an anti-ZEC/anti-SMZ agenda.

¶12. After the election, ZAO spoke with reporters from CCM-run variety radio station "Radio Uhuru," and did an on-camera interview with National network ITV/Radio 1. He also spoke with daily newspapers "Zanzibar Leo" and the "Daily News." Our message remains that we will continue to support the efforts of the UN and ZEC to improve machinery for a free and fair election, but, ultimately, reconciliation between the parties is the only path toward long term progress and development.

PARTY VIEWS

¶13. CCM members looked more exhausted than pleased after the elections. Usually CCM electoral victories are marked by party-sponsored street festivals and rallies, but there were none evident around Stonetown post-election. In a rare occurrence for Zanzibar, CUF candidate Hamad Ali Hamad conceded defeat, but asked his newly elected CCM rival Asha Mohammed to consider working with CUF on issues pertaining to Magogoni. He praised ZEC, yet acknowledged anomalies, which he called "inevitable." He hoped ZEC would "iron out any shortcomings" by 2010.

COMMENT:

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¶14. With high-profile observers from both parties, scores of hand-picked police, the best ZEC had to offer, and enough international observers to cover every polling station full time, and despite the "anomalies," the Magogoni by-election was probably the best-organized election ever held in Zanzibar, as a few senior CUF officials quietly confided to us.

¶15. Looking at the hang-dog faces of CCM members and the barely concealed smirks from CUF immediately after the vote count, one might have been confused as to who was the victor and who the loser. CCM clearly had a long road to travel just to retain its own seat for a single, 11-month term in a local legislature where CCM enjoys an absolute majority, in a CCM-run district the party gerrymandered to control. Whereas a seemingly united CUF had its candidate picked and unanimously supported him well before campaign season, CCM had no less than 10 contenders for the slot. CCM had to bridge factions, appease behind-the-scenes king-makers and navigate contentious party caucuses from the district level up to the National Central Executive Committee just to field a candidate. In the end, CCM's National Executive had to pick the candidate, a virtual unknown who was third choice in local party polling. Then CCM National SYG Makamba had to make several trips to Zanzibar to get the party to work together. A CCM win might have been inevitable, but the fact that the party had to make a hard, muddy slog from precinct to precinct must have been exhaustive (and expensive). For CCM it is as if it has climbed to the top of the mountain only to see more mountains ahead. CCM will have 50 such Districts to win in Zanzibar in 2010, many of which it decidedly does not control.

¶16. CUF, meanwhile, seems to be taking the long view. If it can stay unified and keep discipline among the younger hotheads of the party (and it appears that it can for now), CUF seems able to bring the battle to CCM in every sub-precinct, including in areas thought to be impregnable. CUF also has adopted a seemingly conciliatory attitude toward electoral mechanisms on the one hand and a more bellicose attitude toward CCM on the other.

¶17. While ZEC "volunteers" might fudge voter identification in some cases, the checks and balances of the UN-trained and -supervised machinery, led by newcomer Karna Soro (who is doing a good job in our opinion), generally ran well. Any fraud would not have changed the outcome of Magogoni in our view. Meanwhile, the political reality of Zanzibar remains unchanged since the time of pre-independence: the archipelago is almost equally divided into two political camps. These opposing camps are NOT/NOT aligned on a religious basis (nearly 100 percent Muslim). Nor are they formed on an ethnic basis. Rather, they are based on historical factors relating to the varied responses of sectors and regions of Zanzibar to the British/Sultanate period.

¶18. While ZEC has shown its ability to generally manage one by-election well, it will need continued support from the donors to carry off with equal success an exercise fifty times the size - and with substantially greater stakes - in 2010. At the political level, as discussed recently during President Kikwete's meetings in Washington, we must continue to focus on finding confidence-building measures, to drain the bitterness from Zanzibar politics with a view to political reconciliation and accommodation, perhaps including an agreement on power sharing, before the winner-take-all vote of ¶2010.

ANDRE